

Hawaiian Gazette

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THE DANGERS OF GASOLINE.

The recent deplorable mishap by which three persons lost their lives, and several others, including the popular host of the Beaver Saloon, received painful injuries, ought not to pass out of the public memory until the practical lessons which such an occurrence is calculated to teach, have been taken seriously to heart by all concerned. Importers and merchants who deal in gasoline and analogous substances as merchandise, as well as those who have the immediate handling of such goods, should understand thoroughly their nature and properties, the conditions under which they become dangerous, and the precautions which need to be taken in consequence.

Gasoline, benzine, naphtha, and other lighter products of petroleum are all dangerous. The danger arises from the fact that they are very volatile, giving off vapor at comparatively low temperatures, and that this vapor is very inflammable, so much so that it may be floated considerable distances by the atmosphere and then ignite by coming in contact with flame. This is precisely what happened at the Beaver Saloon. Vapors from a gasoline container opened in the yard, or under a shed, were carried into the kitchen and there took fire, producing the disastrous results with which we are all familiar.

Like gun powder, dynamite and other powerful and dangerous agents, these volatile and inflammable liquids are too useful, too necessary to be prohibited. They must, like powder, be handled with care by persons who understand their properties, and especially be kept at a safe distance from fire. Now and then, as with powder, there will be carelessness, and some one will suffer. In the recent instance there is no blame of mismanagement except such as grew out of ignorance of the proper handling which such a substance required.

There are a considerable number of gasoline arrangements in this city, for lighting both public buildings and private residences. We trust the tragic lesson just given will not be lost upon the owners of any of these, and that they will omit no possible means of impressing the same upon their servants. In addition to the ordinary risks arising from the nature of the substance, gasoline is likely to be especially dangerous when it has recently been shaken up by transportation. Under these circumstances it tends to disengage gas in considerable quantities, somewhat as spent soda water will do if shaken. If, under these circumstances, the vent of the container is opened, gas will issue with no little force, and in such quantities as to be dangerous even at considerable distances from any fire.

It follows also from the volatile nature of gasoline that it not only gives off vapor quite freely at ordinary temperatures, but that a difference of a few degrees makes a marked difference in the quantity evolved. It is to be remembered, therefore, that when its temperature has been raised by any means, as by being exposed to the rays of the sun, in the course of transportation or otherwise, it should never be opened until it has remained sufficiently long in some cool place to have parted with its extra dangerous qualities.

In the Beaver Saloon case, we understand that the two barrel gasoline cylinder which caused the explosion had just come in; it had not only been shaken up, but probably exposed to the sun as well. Could it have been set aside for a day or so the accident would most likely not have happened. That there was a heavy pressure of gas in the cylinder when opened is shown by the rushing, hissing noise, like that of escaping steam, which those in the saloon at the time describe as preceding the explosion. We see too that the evil would have been much less had the gas escaped into the open air instead of under a confined shed.

But the most essential precaution which must be enforced on every mind by this painful experience is, that fluids which give off inflammable vapors should never be opened or handled in the vicinity of fire. In connection with this it should be remembered that the tiniest flame coming in contact with the gas will ignite it as effectually as a stove full of glowing coals.

THE POSITION OF AFFAIRS IN SAMOA—A BRITISH VIEW.

A recent number of the Sydney Daily Telegraph contains an interesting and able review of the essential points in the Samoan complication by Mr. W. McMillan, M. P. We reproduce as much of the article as our space will allow, omitting some portion of the narrative which recounts events with which our readers are already familiar:

As all the troubles in the Pacific have arisen out of the conflict of the various national interests, it may be well to thoroughly understand what is meant by the term "interests" before I give an account of the late extraordinary events connected with the German occupation of Samoa. As the chief danger is to be apprehended from German ambition, it will be sufficient to contrast the actual position of Germany and England in those seas, with slight reference to the claims of France and America.

Almost all the influence which Germany holds in the islands arises out of the trading transactions of one firm. I cannot state exactly the present capital of that firm, but I understand it is about £300,000. It was originally known as "Godeffroy's" before the failure of the bank of that name. It has now a name which is almost a synonyme, and is generally designated, "The German Firm." Since Bismarck has espoused the cause of colonization, this firm has been taken peculiarly under his care. The German Lloyd line of steamers, with a branch between Sydney, Samoa and Tonga, is subsidized annually by the enormous amount of £220,000, much more than the net profit which, under the most favorable circumstances, could be realized by the trading firm. Instead of the traders and planters of this firm carrying on their operations on commercial principles, the whole machinery is more or less political, the Government at Berlin "meddling and meddling" in such a way that the natives have lost all confidence, and are perfectly bewildered with the conflicting national interests, exhibiting a very sorry spectacle of European trickery. The settlement and trade of the islands has been of natural growth, and being, as individuals, much disliked by the natives, their whole status and interests simply rest on the fact of lands easily acquired, often with doubtful title, and the fact that the prestige of the German name and power is kept alive by a display of force in the periodical visits of their ships of war. In all this you will see there is no element of native rights and no question of native predilections.

This it will be noticed corresponds very accurately with the view already expressed by the ADVERTISER in an editorial wherein it was stated that the war in Samoa was "a trader's war;" that it was originally incited by, and was being carried on in the interest of parties whose only concern in the matter was one of private gain. Mr. McMillan next gives brief sketch of the claims of Malietoa and Tama, and the strength of their respective forces. These matters are well understood here and need not be repeated. He proceeds thus, making a strong case in favor of the right of his own country to consideration in the premises:

Now let us examine our own title and interests. In the first place we discovered the islands. In the next place, through missionary enterprise and the civilizing influence of Christianity, we prepared the way for all those possibilities of native industry and European trading in which all nations have participated. In the next place our warships at great cost surveyed the coasts, tempted the perils of the most dangerous waters in the world, made thousands of separate soundings, and by the charts which as a result issued from our Admiralty Department, the very nation who now dispute our position have been enabled to avoid shipwreck and disaster. In the next place, as a practical proof of influence, the only language spoken, outside the native, is English. And finally, what ought certainly not to be overlooked in these enlightened days of so-called democracy, if the Friendly and Navigator Islands were granted a plebiscite to-morrow there would be an enormous majority in favor of British rule. There is no doubt whatever that when England annexed Fiji she should have taken the two other groups of islands and consolidated them all under one rule.

But there was one unpardonable crime of which Malietoa was guilty, which nothing else could excuse. He was determined that the rights of his British and American friends should be respected, and he was unwilling to place himself as a helpless puppet in the hands of the German firm. It appears that about three years ago Malietoa was induced to sign some document which placed him under some kind of contract to the Emperor of Germany. On further consideration he came to the conclusion that everything was not exactly as it had been explained, and that he was really playing into the hands of his enemies. He immediately wrote to the Emperor withdrawing his consent, and at the same time appealed to England for protection, actually offering to place himself under our rule. It is very clear from subsequent events that from that moment the Germans perceived that if they required a political puppet, simply to register their enactments, they would have to find an easier dupe than Malietoa. Then was evidently formed the design to depose the one and to place the other on the throne.

As is well known, on or about September 1, immediately after the Lubeck departed for Sydney, and when all ordinary communication with Samoa was stopped for several weeks, the commander of the German fleet sent on shore a written demand on Malietoa for the payment of £13,000, of which £12,000 represented sundry petty offences against the firm's plantations, stealing coconuts, etc., and the other £1,000 as indemnity for injury to a German boat. It must be understood that the currency in these islands is very restricted, and the almost universal coin is the Chilean dollar but as there are no banks, the sales of the

merchants and traders are the only places where these are kept in large quantities, and it is questionable whether any one firm could have managed on immediate demand to find such a large sum without very great inconvenience. Under these, or even under any circumstances, and from a humanitarian point of view, more especially when dealing with a native, and anxious to impress ideas of European justice, all fair and reasonable time should have been given in order to collect and hand over this indemnity. But those were not the ideas at Berlin. Malietoa asked for one week to consult his chiefs. If given reasonable time and the payment were inevitable, I can vouch for one firm that would have advanced the money, as first-class security could have been obtained, and the natives would have been willing to have sold or mortgaged everything they possessed. But within twenty-four hours after making the demand, and without paying any attention to the king's request, war was declared, and almost immediately 700 troops or marines were landed, and a dash made upon the native "Government House."

Within twenty-four hours of the first landing of troops a proclamation was issued, deposing Malietoa and proclaiming Tama as king. This was another piece of outrageous cruelty, because by this means Malietoa and his followers were not only called upon to fight as ordinary belligerents but were now placed in the position of rebels. If the object had been to drive him to desperation and create a bloody war of partial extermination among the natives, nothing more crafty could have been designed; and although events turned out more happily than could have been expected, I distinctly say that the policy of the Government at Berlin, whether intentionally or not, was entirely calculated to bring the two opposing forces of these half-tamed natives into violent collision, and thereby to have created scenes of horror and bloodshed throughout the whole group of islands.

The iniquitousness of the means by which the German claims were sought to be enforced is well shown up in the above extracts. The unreasonable of at least a portion of the claims themselves can be seen from the following:

Let us examine one of the charges. On the last annual celebration of the Emperor's birthday, some patriotic Germans, in order to show their loyalty according to the usual custom, imbibed a larger quantity of lager beer than was good for them. In the overflow of their feelings they very foolishly gave drink to the natives, on whom it had the usual effect. A general scrimmage of a more or less friendly character ensued, and before the disturbance ended a bottle (I presume empty) was thrown, which injured a German's nose. Now it is not very wonderful that up to the present time it is hotly disputed whether the bottle was thrown by a native or a German. If it is true, as I have every reason to believe, that the Germans gave the natives drink, then certainly most reasonable people will conclude that they deserve no consideration from any respectable government.

The conclusions of the writer are stated clearly, and are of a nature to command assent from disinterested and fair-minded people. As this portion of the paper will not well bear abridgement, we give it entire:

I will now state what seems to me, without further information, is the cause of all these rapid and high-handed proceedings. It has been generally understood that at the conference in Washington, Germany would be placed in the position of mandatory power, with the view of forming a strong international government, agreeable to all the other nations allied. But if that course had been decided, without the intervention of late events, the mandatory power would have been obliged to recognize the status quo previous to such assumption. But this would have meant the recognition of Malietoa, the friend of the British and Americans, who has always resisted the dirty work which he has at times been asked to perform; consequently the status quo had to be altered and "the puppet Tama" elevated. And what monstrous all these machinations? Simply the future adjustment of the land claims. And are British and American citizens to go "cap in hand" to beg of Germany a consideration of their rights knowing that in many cases they clash with alleged claims of German subjects? Surely if England and America deem it necessary that one power should be selected to maintain order, there should in the first place be appointed an international committee to adjust all matters of ownership in property, instead of throwing upon one interested party such an inviolable task and thus sowing the bitter seeds of enmity and future complications, which may render any attempt at government impossible.

As a matter of common fairness to all parties, and as laying the basis of all future government, I should earnestly advise a strong international committee to be appointed to adjust all matters of ownership in property, instead of throwing upon one interested party such an inviolable task and thus sowing the bitter seeds of enmity and future complications, which may render any attempt at government impossible.

To those who take an interest in the future of the native race it is very humiliating to find such an example of unscrupulous ambition as that exhibited by Germany in her recent occupation. To the native mind such proceedings are simply bewildering, coming from an enlightened European—to say nothing of a Christian—nation. To those who still retain the old instincts of British citizenship it is painful and humiliating to find that in seas where our influence dominates, where discovery, chart-making, civilization, construction of native languages and all the elements of a legitimate trade have been introduced by our own courageous pioneers, we are now to be quietly elbowed aside to make way for a firm, whose operations are carried on with an eye regard to the interests of shareholders and which is simply a huge political machine erected and maintained for political purposes.

COMMUNICATION VERSUS ISOLATION.

Stolid indifference, consummate stupidity and idiotic bungling were among the features of political life in the Hawaiian Islands for several years, and the regular sessions of the Legislative Assembly degenerated, under the evil influences of those times, into "a wild carnival of legislative riot." Now that there has been a waking up, and the pulsations of national life and vigor are beginning to be felt, there must follow a healthy growth of all the members of the body, provided they are properly connected together.

At present they are more or less disjointed. We may agitate colonization and railroads on Oahu, and well may Oahu be congratulated on the prospects of success looming up in these enterprises; we may agitate coffee culture, ramie culture, millet culture, horse culture, sheep culture and cow culture; but to place any or all of these enterprises on a safe and permanent footing, we must secure prompt, frequent, regular and cheap mail deliveries, together with low fares and cheap freights to and from all parts of the Kingdom. These are the factors of material development in the great West of America. Without them, millions of homes planted within, say, forty years, would not be there to-day.

So long as immigration means isolation to the would-be immigrant, we can expect to find but few of a desirable class of inhabitants disposed to plant themselves in our waste places. Such immigration can only be secured in any considerable numbers when provision is made for ready communication with the big world around them, and where there is ready access to the highways of commerce. This fact has been fully recognized and acted upon by the governments of all new countries for the past half century.

It remains for the Legislature and Government of the Hawaiian Islands to move effectively in the line of policy marked out and successfully followed in the United States, British America and the Australian Colonies. Mails at least once in each week between all points and Honolulu, close connection with foreign mails, with low fares, low rates of freight, frequent, quick and regular communication in every direction are indispensable conditions of material progress. Without these, stagnation reigns.

Everything cannot be done in a day, or in two years, but let it be understood that the improvements above indicated, together with regular weekly steam communication to and from the Coast, are the objective points at which we aim. Among the pet measures of the next Legislature, one making liberal provisions for securing these objects ought to take precedence of almost everything else. We are quite well aware that it will cost money, and probably considerable of it, to carry out the policy suggested. Large subsidies, or what will look large to our average legislator, may be required. If so, then subsidize, and liberally. It will be better in the end for our taxpayers to foot up even a large sum per annum for purposes of internal trade and the convenience of civilized life than to be laying out, as they are now doing, the same amount to swell the bank accounts of the rich farmers of California.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

It should be stated that the pamphlet on school matters referred to in our editorial of the 19th inst. was largely based upon a report on education in the Hawaiian Islands prepared by Mr. C. J. Lyons of the Government Survey, and forwarded to the Commissioner of Education at Washington in 1872 in response to a request from the latter for information on the subject.

With reference to the statement of General Edward McCook, at one time United States Minister Resident to these Islands, which appeared in Tuesday's ADVERTISER, viz., "that Mr. Seward instructed him to say to the English Commissioner, that any attempt of English men-of-war to interfere with the autonomy of the Hawaiian Government, or to land troops upon any of the islands, would be accepted by the Government of the United States as a declaration of war," we are requested to say that whatever instructions may have been sent by the State Department at Washington to General McCook, they were certainly not communicated by him to Major Wodehouse, Her Britannic Majesty's representative in the Hawaiian Islands.

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